All Saint's University of Medicine conducts their first White Coat Ceremony in Aruba

ORANJESTAD The Sunset Garden at the Divi Phoenix Resort was the venue for the first White Coat Ceremony of the All Saints University of Medicine (ASUM) on Saturday evening. All nine students of the Pre-clinical class (MD IV) were awarded their white coats by various staff members during a beloved ritual that is aimed at not only declaring to the world they have the title of MD, but that they will honor the ethics of their profession.

ASUM opened its doors in Aruba in January of 2005, but has a branch in Bonaire and a parent school in Toronto, Canada, established in 2002. Peter Silberie, Chairman of the ASUM Foundation and was in Aruba for the occasion representing also the other directors of ASUM, Drl Joshua Yusuf and Mr. R. G. Paulpillai. Doctors, undergraduates, and Aruban friends were amongst the 200 that attended the gala reception, a proud moment for the graduates, the school, and all the student body that aspire to be a part of this ceremony. This event marks a milestone in the education of a medical student–entry into clinical medicine. The purpose is to foster humanism in medicine, and commitment to providing compassionate and competent patient care.

"This year the white coat ceremony is the larget event of its kind the university has ever hosted," noted Mr. Silberie. Dr Alper Atasever, MD, PhD and Acting Dean of ASUM performed the duties of Master of Ceremonies, and Dr. Leonard S. Berlinski, a surgeon on the staff of the Horacio Oduber Hospital and new to the staff of ASUM as Conical Coordinator was the Keynote Speaker. His address emphasized the responsibility of the doctor as a member of a community in which he serves, and to his patients as individuals. He noted that it is a continuing and never ending educational and learning process, that the doctors themselves must set a standard to which they will always be striving.

Also addressing the gathering as guest speaker was neurosurgeon and the Chief of Staff of the Horacio Oduber Hospital, Dr. Greg Laclé, and the event was attended by a number of the staff of Aruba's hospital and member of Parliament, Rudy Lampe.

Bharath Muralitharan gave the official address on behalf of his fellow students, sharing with the gathering their pride of accomplishment after years of study and effort. Michel Rizkalla, the first student at ASUM to arrive on the island for classes over one year ago also shared his memories of the hard work and camaraderie he shared with his fellow students.

As each of the seven men and two women placed their arms through the sleeves of their official white coats, this symbol of their determination and drive to achieve they all seemed to stand a little straighter and acquire an air of dignity that was palpable. Once all were garbed in the badge of their profession Dr. Alper Atasever, joined by the staff doctors, lead them in reciting the Hippocratic Oath.

The students of ASUM are for the most part from Canada and the U.S., but their origins stem from all corners of the globe. Sri Lanka, Egypt, Nigeria, India, and numerous other lands were represented on the dais that day, but they all confess to feeling very "at home" in Aruba, which is a virtual "melting pot." .

This ceremony marks the end of their formal medical school education, from here the students will prepare for their U.S. Medical Licensing Exams (USMLE) and, having passed will begin their clinical rotations in Indiana and Atlanta, Georgia. It is the hope of ASUM to establish a clinical rotation program with Aruba's hospital, particularly for its Aruban students.

The News commends the graduates for their dedication and commitment to their goals. Congratulations to David Brown, Edward Boakye, Subhas Illampooranan, Palwinder Kaur, Mashiko Lekand-Tavares, Bharath Muralitharan, Nanthagopal Selvarajh, Samuel Nzegwu, and Michel Rizkalla on their accomplishment.